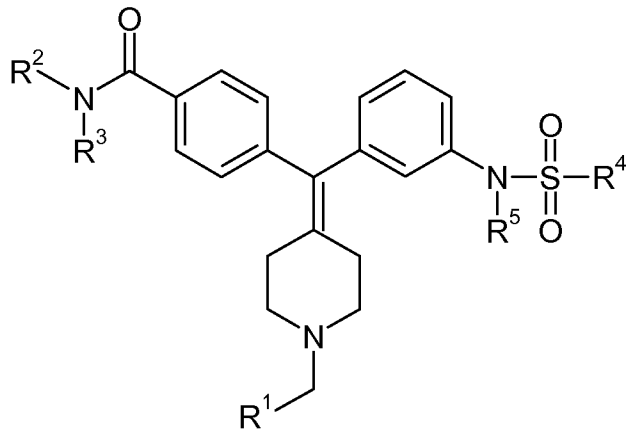
Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A compound of formula I, or ~~a~~ pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof:



I

wherein

R^1 is phenyl; pyridyl; thienyl; furyl; imidazolyl; pyrrolyl; or thiazolyl, wherein R^1 is optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogenated C_{1-6}alkyl, $-NO_2$, $-CF_3$, C_{1-6} alkoxy, chloro, fluoro, bromo, and iodo; ~~selected from C_{6-10}aryl and C_{2-6}heteroaryl, wherein said C_{6-10}aryl and C_{2-6}heteroaryl are optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from -R, $-NO_2$, -OR, -Cl, -Br, -I, -F, $-CF_3$, -C(=O)R, -C(=O)OH, $-NH_2$, -SH, -NHR, $-NR_2$, -SR, $-SO_3H$, $-SO_2R$, -S(=O)R, -CN, -OH, -C(=O)OR, $-C(=O)NR_2$, -NRC(=O)R, and -NRC(=O)-OR, wherein R is, independently, a hydrogen or C_{1-6}alkyl;~~ and

R^2, R^3, and R^4 ~~and R^5~~ are, independently, C_{1-3}alkyl or halogenated C_{1-3}alkyl ~~selected from hydrogen, C_{1-6}alkyl, and C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, wherein said C_{1-6}alkyl and C_{3-6}cycloalkyl are optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from -R, $-NO_2$, -OR, -Cl, -Br, -I, -F, $-CF_3$, -C(=O)R, -C(=O)OH, $-NH_2$, -SH, -NHR, $-NR_2$, -SR, $-SO_3H$, $-SO_2R$, -S(=O)R, -CN, -OH, -C(=O)OR, $-C(=O)NR_2$, -NRC(=O)R, and -NRC(=O)-OR, wherein R is, independently, a hydrogen or C_{1-6}alkyl;~~ and

R^5 is hydrogen.

2. (currently amended) A compound according to claim 1, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof

wherein R^1 is ~~selected from~~ phenyl; pyridyl; thienyl; furyl; ~~imidazolyl; triazolyl; pyrrolyl;~~ or thiazolyl~~; and N-oxido-pyridyl, wherein R^4 is optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogenated C_{1-6}alkyl, -NO_2, -CF_3, C_{1-6} alkoxy, chloro, fluoro, bromo, and iodo~~;

R^2, R^3, and R^4 are, independently, C_{1-3}alkyl ~~or halogenated C_{1-3}alkyl~~; and

R^5 is ~~selected from~~ hydrogen~~, C_{1-6}alkyl, and~~ or ~~C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, wherein said C_{1-6}alkyl and C_{3-6}cycloalkyl are optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogenated C_{1-6}alkyl, -NO_2, -CF_3, C_{1-6} alkoxy, chloro, fluoro, bromo, and iodo~~.

3. (currently amended) A compound according to claim 2 ~~claim 1~~, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof

wherein R^1 is ~~selected from~~ phenyl; pyridyl; thienyl; furyl; ~~imidazolyl; pyrrolyl; and~~ or thiazolyl, ~~wherein R^4 is optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogenated C_{1-6}alkyl, -NO_2, -CF_3, C_{1-6} alkoxy, chloro, fluoro, bromo, and iodo;~~

R^2 and R^3 are ethyl; ~~R^2, R^3, and~~

R^4 is methyl ~~are, independently, C_{1-3}alkyl or halogenated C_{1-3}alkyl~~; and

R^5 is hydrogen.

4. (currently amended) A compound according to claim 1, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof

wherein R^1 is ~~selected from~~ phenyl, pyridyl, thienyl, furyl, imidazolyl, pyrrolyl, ~~and~~ or thiazolyl;

R^2 and R^3 are ethyl;

R^4 is C_{1-3}alkyl; and

R^5 is hydrogen.

5. (currently amended) A compound according to claim 1, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof, wherein the compound is selected from:

N,*N*-diethyl-4-{{3-[(methylsulfonyl)amino]phenyl}[1-(thien-2-ylmethyl)piperidin-4-ylidene]methyl}benzamide;

N,*N*-diethyl-4-[[1-(2-furanylmethyl)-4-piperidinylidene][3-[(methylsulfonyl)amino]phenyl]methyl]-benzamide;

N,*N*-diethyl-4-[[1-(phenylmethyl)-4-piperidinylidene][3-[(methylsulfonyl)amino]phenyl]methyl]-benzamide;

N,*N*-diethyl-4-[[3-[(methylsulfonyl)amino]phenyl][1-(3-pyridinylmethyl)-4-piperidinylidene]methyl]-benzamide; and

N,*N*-diethyl-4-[[3-[(methylsulfonyl)amino]phenyl][1-(3-thiazolyl-methyl)-4-piperidinylidene]methyl]-benzamide~~;~~
~~and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof~~.

6. (cancelled)

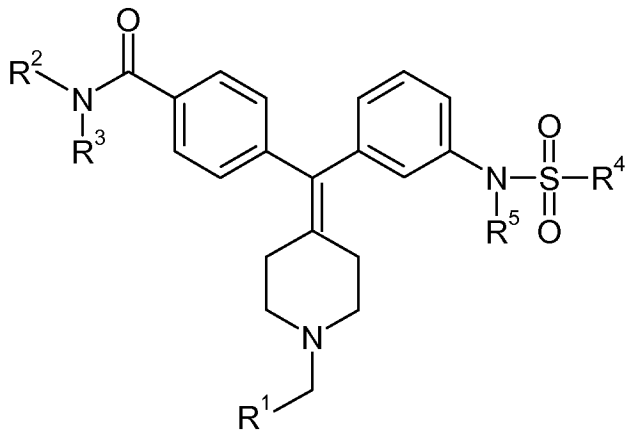
7. (currently amended) A method for the therapy of pain, anxiety or functional gastrointestinal disorders, comprising ~~the step of~~ administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 1, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof.

8. (currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to claim 1, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

9. (currently amended) A method for the therapy of pain in a warm-blooded animal, comprising ~~the step of~~ administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 1, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof.

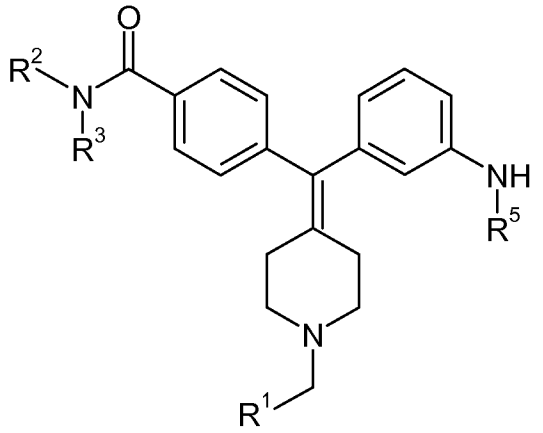
10. (currently amended) A method for the therapy of functional gastrointestinal disorders in a warm-blooded animal, comprising ~~the step of~~ administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 1, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof.

11. (currently amended) A process for preparing a compound of formula I, comprising:



I

reacting a compound of formula II with $X\text{-}S(=O)_2\text{-}R^4$ or $R^4S(=O)_2\text{-}O\text{-}S(=O)_2R^4$.



II

wherein

X is selected from Cl, Br and I;

R^1 is phenyl; pyridyl; thienyl; furyl; imidazolyl; pyrrolyl; or thiazolyl, wherein R^1 is optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogenated C_{1-6}alkyl, $-NO_2$, $-CF_3$, C_{1-6} alkoxy, chloro, fluoro, bromo, and iodo; ~~selected from C_{6-10}aryl and C_{2-6}heteroaryl, wherein said C_{6-10}aryl and C_{2-6}heteroaryl are optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from -R, $-NO_2$, -OR, -Cl, -Br, -I, -F, $-CF_3$, -C(=O)R, -C(=O)OH, $-NH_2$, -SH, -NHR, $-NR_2$, -SR, $-SO_3H$, $-SO_2R$, -S(=O)R, -CN, -OH, -C(=O)OR, $-C(=O)NR_2$, -NRC(=O)R, and -NRC(=O)-OR, wherein R is, independently, a hydrogen or C_{1-6}alkyl~~; and

R^2, R^3, and R^4 ~~and R^5~~ are, independently, C_{1-3}alkyl or halogenated C_{1-3}alkyl ~~selected from hydrogen, C_{1-6}alkyl, and C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, wherein said C_{1-6}alkyl and C_{3-6}cycloalkyl are optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from -R, $-NO_2$, -OR, -Cl, -Br, -I, -F, $-CF_3$, -C(=O)R,~~

~~-C(=O)OH, -NH_2, -SH, -NHR, -NR_2, -SR, -SO_3H, -SO_2R, -S(=O)R, -CN, -OH, -C(=O)OR, -C(=O)NR_2, -NRC(=O)R, and -NRC(=O)-OR, wherein R is, independently, a hydrogen or C_{1-6}alkyl~~; and

R^5 is hydrogen.

12 (currently amended) A method for the therapy of pain, anxiety or functional gastrointestinal disorders, comprising ~~the step of~~ administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 2, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof.

13. (currently amended) A method for the therapy of pain, anxiety or functional gastrointestinal disorders, comprising ~~the step of~~ administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 3, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof.

14. (currently amended) A method for the therapy of anxiety, comprising ~~the step of~~ administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 1, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof.

15. (currently amended) A method for the therapy of anxiety, comprising ~~the step of~~ administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 2, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof.

16. (currently amended) A method for the therapy of anxiety, comprising ~~the step of~~ administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 3, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof.

17. (currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to claim 2, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

18. (currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to claim 3, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

19. (currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to claim 4, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.